



IN THE
Young World



By
Edith M. Thomas

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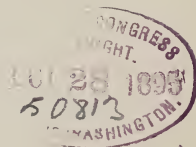
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IN THE YOUNG WORLD

BY

EDITH M. THOMAS



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1896

(1895)

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TO EDITH FRANCES MEDAIRY

*In Little Edith's name
I bid this book of verses go ;
Yet she cannot spell nor read,
Nor a single letter show !
Do not think it strange, indeed ;
'Tis such a little time ago
Since Little Edith came.*

*No excuse I 'll make :
Brightest eyes and busiest hands —
She grows wiser every day !
Other children, through the land,
Older children, meantime, may
Read my book and understand,
For Little Edith's sake.*



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“US CHILDREN”

- “Us children,” so we used to say,
When we planned what we would play;
“Us children” would do so and so,
Wonder-ways we meant to go,
If the weather should be fair.*
- “Us children,” always, everywhere;
Flowering in the woods in Spring,
Where we made the echoes ring,
Nutting in October days,
When the woods seemed all ablaze.*
- “Us children,” so we always said —
“Us children,” loath to go to bed,
Telling stories round the fire!*
- “Us children?” Some one would inquire,
“That, you know, is not the way,
‘We children,’ you should learn to say.”
Try as hard as try we might,*
- “We children” never would seem right!
Some of us forget, and say
“Us children,” to this very day!
US CHILDREN in this book may see
Themselves, and so, will pardon me.*

I

SYLVIA AND THE FLOWERS



IN THE YOUNG WORLD

SYLVIA AND THE FLOWERS

PART FIRST

A CONVERSATION ABOUT FLOWERS

Sylvia and her mother. Sylvia, who has sprained her ankle, lies on a sofa drawn up before an open window. Beyond are a broad piazza, shade trees, and a green lawn.

SYLVIA.



HOW long the days are, mother,
— Oh, so long!

And they were short when I was
well and strong.

The time will never come, it
seems to me,

When, before breakfast, I shall go and see
What flowers have blossomed out since yes-
terday.

So many flowers have come and gone away,
That I have never seen, — the lovely flowers!

MOTHER.

They count their lifetime not by years but
hours ;
A day for them, — one day of sun and dew,
My Sylvia, is like ten years for you.

SYLVIA.

The flowers came visiting me one day — I
mean
I made believe they did. First came the
Queen,
The great red Rose, the very first to bloom,
Upon the fan-shaped trellis. All made room
For her, and many smiles and nods she gave.
I said, "Your Majesty, one leaf I crave,
Just one red leaf for" — (Oh, how queer
I cannot say that word !) —

MOTHER.

"For souvenir?"

SYLVIA.

Yes, that 's the word I meant — for souvenir !
She said, — at least, I played she said, "My
dear,
Your wish shall be fulfilled, if you will be
One of my people, always true to me."
"I will, Your Majesty." (I spoke out loud.)
And then, just like a raindrop from a cloud,

Came twinkling down a fine red velvet leaf.
A strange thing happened, next : there came
a thief
That stole the rose-leaf, right before my eyes !
Guess who it was.

MOTHER.

Perhaps Puck in disguise.
Strange pranks sometimes the Little People
play,
(So say the fairy-tales) about Midsummer
day.

SYLVIA.

'T was only a bee, — a little buzzing bee,
With yellow stripes, that stole the leaf from
me.
She picked it up, and held it folded tight
In both her arms — and flew away so light !

MOTHER.

And said perhaps (we'll make believe she
said),
"I need that velvet leaf, so smooth and
red,
Much more than you ; so, little girl, I'll take
And cut it nicely out, and with it make
My baby's cradle soft, and warm, and rich."

SYLVIA.

O Mother ! no bee ever took a stitch !
Besides, bees live in hives — I'm sure they
do,
And are *so* busy making honey, too !

MOTHER.

Not all. This was the Solitary Bee,
And you would greatly wonder, could you
see,
Within some hollow stem, her curious cell
All lined with leaves, cut out and fitted well.

SYLVIA.

Mamma ! Next time the flowers come visit-
ing me,
I shall invite the Solitary Bee !
I wonder what the flowers think of the bees,
Who never even say so much as "please,"
When they go diving in a blossom's cup,
Or bell, to bring the sweet, sweet honey
up !

MOTHER.

A little verse long, long ago I knew —

SYLVIA.

Try to remember it — Oh, mother, do !

MOTHER.

(After a pause remembers, and repeats the verse.)

The rosemary blossoms, so sweet,
Niña Isabel,
Are simple blue flowers, to-day ;
To-morrow, they 're honey — ah, well !

How the flowers to honey are changed,
Niña Isabel,
Only the honey-bee knows,
And the honey-bee will not tell !¹

A playmate once, a little Spanish girl,
With every tooth as white as glistening pearl,
And hair as blue-black as the blackbird's
wing,
Would often say this verse, and oftener sing.

SYLVIA.

Who 's "Niña Isabel" ?

MOTHER.

I do not know, —
Some little Isabel of long ago.

SYLVIA.

I 'll learn the pretty verse by heart, to say
When I am tired of thinking all the day.

¹ In part translated from the Spanish.

Since I've been sick, I've shut my eyes up
fast,

And made believe I saw the flowers go past,
Just as we children form into a line

And "Forward, march!" when teacher gives
the sign.

Outdoors, I always knew what all the flowers
Would say, and talked with them for hours
and hours.

But oh! it is so hard to make believe
When you're shut up at home!

[Sylvia draws a deep sigh.]

MOTHER.

Dear child, don't grieve;
I have a pleasure planned in mind, for you,
And Mabel, Florence, Madge, and little
Hugh,

And all the rest shall take a part with me.
When you're a little stronger, you shall see.
But now lie still, and fall asleep, perhaps;
It is a lazy day, and little naps
Are in the air; and one may chance your
way.

Here, close beside you, with my work, I'll
stay.

*Sylvia sleeps. The birds in the trees call drowsily.
The scent of honeysuckle and the hum of bees come*

in through the open window. Sylvia's mother sits beside her, sewing. An interval. Sylvia, waking, utters some indistinct word.

MOTHER.

What, dear? You're talking in your sleep!

Ah, yes,

I see you have been dreaming. I can guess
It was a pleasant dream. Those happy eyes
In dreamland meet with many a glad surprise.

SYLVIA.

O mother, now I have a lovely plan,
And mother, please to help me all you can!
If you will write it, word for word, I'll tell
My dream, while I remember it so well.
It's what the garden fairies say and do.
And Mabel, Florence, Madge, and little
Hugh,
And all the others — we will act it out,
When I am up again, and go about.
I'm sure you'll think 't will make a lovely
play.

MOTHER.

Yes, dear. But dreams do sometimes slip
away,
So tell me all about it, while you may.

Sylvia proceeds as if to tell her dream, which her mother writes down. Afterwards it is arranged as a Play.

PART SECOND

A FLOWER PLAY

In which a number of children, Sylvia's friends, take part; also, Sylvia, who has recovered.

Characters: *Sylvia; The Flower-Elves; Daffodil, their leader; The Garden-Gossips: Hist, High-Spy, Pitpat, True, Trim, Wavery, Glimmery, Bubble, Nip, and Nim.*

The children representing the Flower-Elves and Garden Gossips should be dressed in character.

DAFFODIL.

(At the head of the Flower Elves, the Garden Gossips following, all turning towards Sylvia.)

It is so many and so many a day
(Not later than the very last of May)
Since you've been seen upon the garden-
walk,
We thought we'd come and have a cosy talk,
And tell you what your friends have been
about.

You have forgotten some of them, no doubt?

[The Flower-Elves all bow here.]

SYLVIA.

Indeed, I have n't! — You are Daffodil;
You know I never could forget you. Still,
It does seem very strange to have you here

Right in the summer season of the year :
You come so early, in the wind and rain,
Not later than the May.

DAFFODIL.

I should explain
That we are not the darling flowers them-
selves,
Although we seem so : we are but the elves
That take good care of every flower that
blows.
Each flower-elf every other flower-elf knows,
Whether of earliest Spring or Summer's
close,
From bashful snowdrop to the proud red
rose.
Ah, well, I see you do not understand —
I can but say, 't is so in Faeryland.

SYLVIA.

Tell me of Faeryland, dear Daffodil.

DAFFODIL.

Not I. But there are Gossips here, who will.
Here's Hist, and High-Spy, Pitpat, True and
Trim,
And Wavery, Glimmery, Bubble, Nip, and
Nim.

[Here all bow very low to Sylvia.]

They know the news ; they gad about and
hear
What 's done in Faeryland the whole round
year.

SYLVIA (*to herself*).

How droll ! Some seem all eye, and some all
ear —
But that 's the way, I s'pose, to see and hear.

(*To the Garden Gossips.*)

Now tell me what is done in Faeryland.
Talk flower or bird talk, please ; I 'll under-
stand.
What have you seen in Faeryland, or heard ?

WAVERY AND GLIMMERY (*speaking together*).

We 've seen them making wings of maple
keys,
With which they float about upon the breeze.

SYLVIA.

Of course : the seeds that from the maples fall
In Spring, are just like wings ! And is that
all ?

HIGH-SPY.

I 've seen them on the spokes of thistle-down
Ride here and there above the fields all
brown !

NIP AND NIM (*together*).

We've seen them harness two great moths,
with eyes
Like rubies, or like fire —

PITPAT.

Yes, dragon-flies
I've seen them drive with lines of gossa-
mer —
Cicadas, too, that all day long sing *ch-r-r* !

SYLVIA.

I did n't dream that *they* were any good
For horses — yet they might be, if they
would !

BUBBLE.

I've seen the elf-folk bringing down the dew !

HIST.

And I have heard the blossoms drinking, too !

SYLVIA.

How do they bring the dew down to the
flowers ?

BUBBLE.

From the sky-fountain, in the twilight hours ;
In least small pitchers, holding half a drop,

They bring it down, and pass it round, and
stop
At every flower, however plain or small.

SYLVIA.

Of course, the lilies drink the most of all ?

BUBBLE.

Oh, yes ; yet little Speedwell, scarcely seen
(She is so small) in pastures wide and green,
Each night one pitcherful of dew obtains,
So all are satisfied, and none complains.

SYLVIA.

And yet, some flowers I've seen look sadly
down,
Some seem to smile, and others wear a frown.

TRUE.

I see you never heard the song they sing
In Faeryland, about that very thing.
They sing, and while they sing they act each
part ;
I almost know the song myself by heart.
I'd sing it for you, but I dare not try,
Because the flower-elves might n't like it —

SYLVIA.

Why,

Where are the flower-elves gone ?

TRUE.

They'll be here soon —
 They always take a nap just at the stroke of
 noon,
 For then the flowers are sleeping too. Go,
 Trim,
 And bring a diamond goblet filled up to the
 brim,
 With honeysuckle dew we caught last night.
 See that the dew has not stood in the
 light ;
 First, strain it well, according to the rule ;
 Then drop a tiny starbeam in, to make it
 cool.

[TRIM *goes, and returns almost instantly with
 the goblet, which he presents to Sylvia.*]

TRIM.

Now, Sylvia, drink ; 't is very soothing —
 very.
 Titania drinks it, — our good Queen of Faery.

INTERLUDE SPOKEN BY PITPAT.

The lady to the garden came ;
 She called her flowers, each one, by name,
 And knew how many buds each had.
 The flowers all knew that she was glad,
 And bloomed their best all summer through.

To her the lilies kisses threw,
And bowed to her with courtly grace;
The foxglove peered into her face,
It stood so very tall and straight!

There lingered by the garden-gate
A little urchin flower-child
Who, well the lady guessed, was wild.
Its eye was black, and there were streaks
And stains of purple on its cheeks,
As though the sly, mischievous elf
To jam had lately helped itself —
To jam, or jelly, on the shelf!

The flowers all bent a frowning view,
The flowers all watched what she would
do,
To punish this bold runagate.
For creeping through the garden-gate.
They heard her speak, they saw her bend,
And, "What's your name, my little friend?"
She said, and gazed with smiling face.

Then ran a whisper round the place:
"Who is it dares to make so free?"
"A pansy — so it seems to me!"
"A violet — if I see aright!"
"I'd be ashamed of such a plight!"

“ And yet, the little rogue looks bright ! ”
Then up and spoke the truant sprite,
With lips and cheeks all streaked with jam,
“ I ’m only Johnny Jump-up, Ma’am ! ”

Enter a Bee and a Butterfly.

HIGH-SPY.

Ah, who is that, just fluttering in, I see ?
My eyes ! ’T is Mistress Solitary Bee !

SOLITARY BEE (*complainingly*).

Except that Sylvia invited me,
I ’d not be here. Perhaps I make too free ?

BUBBLE.

Too oft you ’ve robbed the flower-elves, yet
you may
(Since Sylvia herself invites you) stay.

NIP.

And who is this ? A young, young Butter-
fly !

Within his chrysalis I saw him lie
Only an hour ago ! He looks so limp,
His wings show every little crease and
crimp !

NIM.

Some one go help him ; gently fan him — so ;
Too near to Mistress Bee you must not go !

BUBBLE.

Of course, we 'll be polite to Sylvia's guest,
And yet, a little caution would be best.
Old mistress Bee and Baby Butterfly —
I never saw so odd a pair — not I !

The Flower-Elves re-enter, Daffodil taking the lead.

HIST (*after consulting Daffodil*).

The flower-elves have returned, all fresh and
 gay,
From their short nap. They 're ready, so
 they say,
To sing that song for you — and there they
 stand !
The song is called by us in Faeryland,

THE FLOWERS THAT LOOK UP, AND THE FLOW-
ERS THAT LOOK DOWN.

The Flower-Elves arrange themselves in two groups, facing each other. They speak alternately, first those representing the flowers that look up, then those representing the flowers that look down — both suiting the action to the words. They obey Daffodil's directions at all times.

(The Song.)

THE FIRST GROUP OF FLOWERS.

There were Daisy and Cornflower and Poppy
and Pink,
And the Iris that stands by the water to
drink,
Marigold, Larkspur, and Tulip, and Rose,
And the Flower-of-an-Hour, that just blossoms
and goes ;
And Hepaticas pale, faint-colored like pearls ;
And Sunflower, and Eyebright, and little
Blue-Curls ;
And the great scarlet Balm, and the Thistle
so proud,
And Bluets that stand in a twinkling crowd,
And Climb-well, and June-sweet and Honey-
sup :
These are the flowers that always look up ;
Some of them tame, and some of them wild,
And some only bloom for Titania's child !

THE SECOND GROUP.

There were Jonquils and Snowdrops, and
Lilies all pale,
Violets, Myrtle, and Bluebells so frail ;
And the Hyacinth sweet with its scented
bell,

And the Moccasin-Flower in the dewy dell;
And the Indian Pipe, and the Trillium white,
And the Jewel-weed, and the Columbine
 bright;
And the Shadow Flower, flitting away
 through the grass,
And the Lady Flower sad with her looking-
 glass,
And the Lost Flower that somebody dropped
 in the town:
These are the flowers that always look
 down, —
Some of them tame and some of them wild,
And some only bloom for Titania's child!

THE FIRST GROUP.

Whenever the weather is mild and fair
And not a leaf stirs in the sunny air,
Then, in meadows and woods, for many a
 mile,

ALL TOGETHER.

The flowers that look up — they look up and
 smile;
And the flowers that look down — they look
 down and sigh,
And they do this forever, yet no one knows
 why!

THE SECOND GROUP.

When the clouds arise and darken the sky,
And the wind from the East goes rustling by,
And the big drops fall every once in a while,

ALL TOGETHER.

The flowers that look up — they look up and
 smile ;
And the flowers that look down — they look
 down and sigh,
And they do this forever, yet no one knows
 why !

SYLVIA.

Thank you, a thousand, thousand times, dear
 elves !

DAFFODIL.

(Speaking for the Flower-Elves and bowing to Sylvia.)

To hear you say so, gives us joy, ourselves.
If you could go with us, how pleased you'd
 be,
With all that you in Faeryland would see.

HIGH-SPY.

Before this company breaks up, and goes,
(If you will pardon me), I would propose
That we should take our friend away with us ;
One day, at least, she'd like to stay with us.

PITPAT.

Ah, yes ; I see — yes, if it *could* be done.

HIGH-SPY.

You know how great is great King Oberon :
Ten thousand carriage-horses at command
Has our illustrious King of Faeryland ;
The gentle Katydids so trim and light,
And dragon-flies as swift, as strong in flight ;
Ten thousand teams that draw our moving-
vans ;

And then, as many good black beetle spans —
Why can't we do it, I should like to know ?
We'll get our King's consent, and she shall
go. •

SYLVIA.

The coach will be the trouble, I should think.

TRIM.

Oh, no ! I'll manage that in half a wink.

HIGH-SPY.

What say you, Wavery, Glimmery, Hist, and
Bubble ?

ALL.

(*Clapping their hands and speaking together.*)

To faery-folk such trifles are no trouble !

NIP AND NIM.

We too, at once, will seek King Oberon,
And learn if his permission can be won.

HIST.

Hark! hark! I think he's coming up this
way;

His troops he musters on Midsummer Day.
Yes! now I hear the merry buglers play!
We'll kneel beside the road as he goes by,
And, I believe, our wants he will supply.

SYLVIA.

Why! Faeryland must be, indeed, quite near.
Kind Gossips, I can walk there, never fear!

DAFFODIL.

We'll go ahead, and guide you, Sylvia dear.

HIGH-SPY.

King Oberon's banners on the hill appear!

HIST.

The Queen is coming too, and how the
soldiers cheer!

*(All hurry forward with eager faces, Sylvia with the
rest.)*

(Some one Sings.)

Sylvia's gone to Faeryland !
Faeryland, ho ! Faeryland
Lies ever close at hand ;
You may find it if you list —
If you look and if you list,
The way cannot be missed !

II

UNDER GREEN BOUGHS



UNDER GREEN BOUGHS

APRIL



HO is this weeper with the twinkling eye —
This smiler with the long-drawn sigh,
This elf with cap awry,
That loves such range
Of change?
Strange!
Well?
Pray tell
Whence comes the spell
Wrought by this changeling sly,
To make us laugh, to make us cry,
Just as he does himself — we know not why?

MORNING IN BIRDLAND



T one in the morning,
All's silent in Birdland, all
bright eyes are curtained,
and folded all wings.

At two in the morning,
Some dreaming young thing a snatch of its
daytime roundelay sings.

At three in the morning,
Early-Bird chides his slow neighbors, and then
falls asleep unaware !

At four in the morning,
All, merry and mad, pour a medley of song on
the quivering air.

GOOD MORROW!



GOOD morrow, O sweet morning,
Kiss me with sun and wind,
And without word of warning,
Drive Winter from the mind ;
Then let the heart be taken
With many a happy sigh,
To hear the songs awaken
From out the bluebird sky ;
The robins' silver fluting,
Upon the maple tops :
The sparrows' gay disputing,
In every hedge and copse ;
The lark's long, mellow whistle
Where fields are cool and moist ;
The finch upon the thistle ;
The wood-dove, echo-voiced ;
The phœbe, softly calling :
The warblers' hidden choir,
Where apple-flowers are falling,
And darts the oriole's fire.
The swallow builds her dwelling
Of clay from sunny pools ;
The doves their loves are telling, —
The scolding wren o'errules.
Up starts the golden flicker,

And hurls his notes about ;
The blue jays tilt and bicker, —
The cuckoo's a sly scout :
But hark ! from last year's stubble,
How cheerly pipes the quail,
And bobolink notes up-bubble
From yonder grassy swale ;
The blackbird, free from trouble,
Pours out a gossip tale ;
And laughs the crow at pillage,
In fields of planted corn : —
All, wild with Spring's distillage,
All, mad with joy this morn !
Good morrow, O sweet morning !
Good cheer unto my songs ;
Come ye, in thronging measures,
As Spring birds come in throngs.

" WELCOME, ROBIN, OR THRUSH ! "



ROBIN, Robin, my dear, with your
stolen name

The Puritan gave you when from
old England he came,

The homesick Puritan gave
you —

Robin, Robin, you 're only a thrush, I
know,

A friend of the summer, in autumn away you
will go —

Away you will go — Heaven save you !

So you desert us when nests are all empty
and drear,

And not a bird's note awakes the faint heart
of the year :

Ah, Robin, Robin, why will you ?

Is it that after your absence we 'll prize you
the more,

And the song that you sing, when some morn-
ing in May you outpour

The hopes of the Springtime, that fill
you ?

Welcome, Robin, or Thrush — it is all the
 same,
 (Yet I would you should keep the old memo-
 rial name),
 Yes, and I bid you be merry!
 And when the June comes with the rose and
 the new-mown hay,
 The short, sweet nights all dew, and the
 longest day,
 Welcome to berry and cherry!

THE MESSAGE OF THE BIRDS.

“Several birds also visited the ships; three of a small kind which keep about groves and orchards came singing in the morning, and flew away again at evening.” — IRVING'S *Columbus*.



WHAT were the birds that came
 singing at morn,
 Over the Sea Sargasso borne
 On the breeze from the mystic
 West, —
 That sang all day, but at eve flew away
 To a secret isle of rest?

What were the three from orchard and
 grove?
 Our bluebird, and wren, and redbreast rove
 Afar in the fall of the year —

Perchance it was these, on the trackless
 seas,
That charmed the great admiral's ear !

MAY-DEW



H, would you know why
 So bright is her eye,
It dazzles your own in the greet-
 ing ?
 Why her brows are so white,
 That the snowflake light
Would melt, unperceived in the meeting ?
 Why the sweetbrier speaks
 In the pink of her cheeks —
Her lips with red roses competing ?

Each morning she 's gone,
 With the bird-notes of dawn,
And the bell in the pasture that tinkles —
 To bathe in the dew
 Of the May when it 's new,
On the grass and the flowers, as it twinkles ;
 They that do so
 Are best guarded, I trow,
Against withering Time and his wrinkles.

A WILD BOUQUET

I. COLUMBINE.



LONG the airy ledge they start
in line, —
Gay scarlet buglers of the colum-
bine.

II. MILKWEED.

These coral horns hold milk of Paradise,
Yet will detain poor Gauze Wings in a vise.

III. CLEMATIS.

Through thickets and by banks the Beauty
runs
And flings her snow-wreaths to Midsummer
suns.

IV. BOUNCING BET.

A garden once was here — poor Bouncing
Bet,
She loves the place she used to live in, yet !

V. BLUETS.

Sweetly their rugged lot they can endure, —
The bright-eyed, thankful children of the
poor !

THE FLEUR-DE-LIS



O, midget maiden sweet to see,
And sweet to kiss — if that might
be,
Go, search the garden through
and through,
And bring the flower you love most true.

The midget maid from La belle France,
Threw back an arch and laughing glance ;
“ I ’m April’s pet and precious tease,
I change my mind just when I please.”

She plucked a rose, a sprig of May,
A daffodil, a tulip gay,
A pink, a modest violet,
A daisy white, some mignonette —

But then, just then, she chanced to see
The flower of France, the fleur-de-lis ;
She softly laughed, and dropped the rest,
“ This flower I love the very best !”

THE DAY'S EYE



HAT does the daisy see,
In the breezy meadow tossing?
It sees the wide blue fields over-
head,
And the little cloud-flocks
crossing —

What does the daisy see,
Round the sunny meadow glancing?
It sees the butterflies' chase,
And the filmy gnats at their dancing.

What does the daisy see,
Down in the grassy thickets?
The grasshoppers green and brown,
And the shining coal-black crickets.

It sees the bobolink's nest
That no one else can discover,
And the brooding mother-bird,
With the floating grass above her.

THE WINTERGREEN



WHITE hangs the wintergreen bell
By shady hillside and dell,
White as the new-fallen snow :
So cool and so sweet
It lies at your feet,
It looks like a lost child of Winter !
Does any one know
Why it strays in the Kingdom of Summer ?

Red is the wintergreen fruit,
When the woodland is faded and mute,
And dim with the falling snow :
So warm and so bright
In the dreary light,
It looks like a lost child of Summer !
Does any one know
Why it strays in the Kingdom of Winter ?

A SUMMER SHOWER



DOWN, down, so full, so free,
Down like a flood the cooling
comfort poured
That sagging clouds had stored :
It seemed as if beneath the ancient sea
Our summer world lay rocking to and fro ;
The meadows, in long undulations rolled,
Looked dim and far and cold,
Like banks of seaweed in the depths below ;
The heavy trees with the wet whirlwind
strove,
As might some coral grove
When tempests visit the deep ocean vales.

What, ho ! Aloft Fair Weather sets her sails,
White cloud-craft blown along the upper blue ;
The wind from out the west
Goes singing on its quest,
And rumors that the world is made anew !
And now it tries to raise the lodged grain ;
Now, coming to the trees o'ercharged with
rain,
From their green domes and towers
It calls down mimic showers.

How slow yon flowers uplift their heads
again!

These roses half out-blown
Are like fair sleepers' eyes
Beneath whose lids arise
Tears from a well of grief or joy unknown,
That linger still although the dream has
flown.

NICOR



NICOR, the water sprite, slipped
from the sky,
To the top of a mountain cold ;
He caught all the arrows the
frost let fly,
And they turned to rain in his hold.

He quarried a block of the glacier ice,
And carved him a chalice entire ;
And adorned it with many a fair device,
And annealed it in sunset fire.

He fashioned a key that would turn the locks
Of the cells of the sleeping streams ;
And they glided forth, in glistening flocks,
Laughing within their dreams.

Then, at once, he struck from their still
bound feet

The massy fetters they bore ;
And they followed him, henceforth, glad and
fleet,

Down the summit scarred and hoar.

Many the shaggy pine he snapped,
And hurled it along like a lance ;
Many the mountain garden he lapped,
With its dead and its springing plants.

Sometimes, advancing, he waved his flag,
Cloud-white, and with sudden cheer,
Over the brow of an airy crag
He leaped — ten fathoms sheer.

And ever against his downward flight,
Was the wind-footed Iris seen,
Weaving a fillet of many-hued light,
To bind on his tresses sheen.

And now in the low green vale he dwells,
And the little streams thither haste,
To hear the tales the traveller tells
Of the mountains, wild and waste.

But ever and oft, in the deep of night,
As the curling mists arise,
Nicor, the homesick water sprite,
Revisits his home in the skies.

A HUMBLE BALLOONIST



HERE is a noiseless spinner dark
and small,
Her house a curled leaf or a tuft
of heather ;
She lives alone within her silken
hall,
Or at her window sits in sunny weather.

Perchance there comes a time of wind and
rain,
That fills and tips the meadow lily's chalice,
And brims the hollows of the grassy plain,
And makes an island of the spinner's palace.

What does she then ? Discouraged not at all,
She spies beyond the flood some favored high-
land ;
And now she plans, within her silken hall,
A way by which to leave the flooded island.

She throws a web upon the air, and soon
'T is caught, and lifted by the willing breezes ;
Then, freed from trouble, in her light balloon
Our spinner travels whereso'er she pleases.

The fairy gentlefolk her car may borrow,
When they would go a journey thro' the sky.
Keep watch ; perhaps to-day, perhaps to-
morrow,
You may behold them drifting, drifting by !

“BLOSSOM, BLOSSOM ON THE GREEN
BOUGH !”



LOSSOM, blossom on the green
bough ! —
And the birds to sing as the birds
know how,
And the bees to murmur the
“amens” sweet,
And the grass a fine carpet beneath our feet ;
And a glimpse of white clouds in the blue
sky spaces,
Like a ceiling with frescoes of cherub faces !
The orchard was decked like a “Children’s
Day” chapel ;
So we played that in church very quiet we sat,

And listened, and looked ! But we soon tired
of that ;

Then on a low branch we would swing and
sing

In the flower-snowing time of the blossom-
white Spring ;

While Echo — wild Echo who lived in the
hill,

Would listen and answer us still.

"Bring us a pound-sweet apple !" we cried.

And Echo, — wild Echo replied,

"Sweet apple — sweet apple !"

Apple, apple on the green bough !

The honey-bees work in the clover fields now,
And the grass underfoot grows long and
grows strong.

The birds are too busy for even a song ;
For the old ones are teaching the young ones
to fly,

With many a flutter, and many a cry, —
And now, they are flown in the blue sky
spaces !

The ripening fruit the blossom replaces, —
Here a globe of bright gold may be seen,
there a dapple

Of russet and crimson ! We sing, and we
swing

On the apple-tree limb, as we did in the
Spring.

And Echo — wild Echo who lives in the
hill,

Still listens, and answers us still.

“Bring us a pound-sweet apple!” we cry,

And Echo is swift to reply,

“Sweet apple — sweet apple!”

ECHO



WILDER, the gray magician, set a cunning
snare,

Crafty were its meshes woven all
of air.

Sylphs in gold and azure, with
the web were caught,

Birds that haunt king's chambers, with accus-
ings fraught,

Urchin sprites, that live in gems and prised
beams ;

Fairy armies marching, trumpets, flags and
teams ;

These, and more were tangled in his woven
toils,

But he gave to Fancy all the precious spoils.

Once he heard a sighing, faintly shrill it
came,

“Set me free, wise master ; I can spread thy
fame.”

“Softly now, sweet truant, softly now,” said
he,

“You must tell your story, ere I set you
free !” —

“I am but an echo, scarcely heard ere gone,
In the sky I fold me like a star at dawn ;
Mountain winds uplift me on their rustling
wings,

Green hills give me shelter by their rocks and
springs ;

I am but a murmur, light upon the air,
You can never trace me, for no path I wear !”

“Sometimes from the minster vesper sounds
I steal —

Bear them to the desert where they faintly
peal ;

Then the traveler gazes round the vacant
plain,

Trembling, lest some madness hath beset his
brain !

Or in shepherd valleys, there I make my cell,
And I love to linger round a mossy well,

And draw up a murmur from its hollow
throat,
Where a day-star twinkles, a pale golden
mote.

“But when battle rages, then I seek the rocks,
And like buried thunder, I give back the
shocks.

Oft in sport, I carry poet's song afar,
Even while he sigheth, ‘Few my lovers are!’
Or else, all unbidden, from a heart I rise;
If the lips deny me, I possess the eyes!

“Once I went to heaven, and I stole a song:
Hermes could not take me, tho’ he followed
long!

I ’t was loved Narcissus, — what is that to
thee?

He may live or perish, I shall never see!
Leans he by smooth waters, ’mong the dryad
elves?

Do his flower-lips quiver, pining for them-
selves?

I am but a murmur, light upon the air,
Care and love and sorrow long I may not
bear.

This is all my story, bid me now be free —
I hear Music floating — Music calls for me!”

Weir, the gray magician, laughed and let her
go,
Singing like the arrow when it leaves the bow.

CHASED BY THE MOON



HERE is mischief in the moon
When she shows her face in day-
time, —
Laughing mouth and quizzing
eye!

All the livelong afternoon
She had spoiled my brave boy's play-time,
Watching, watching like a spy!

Though close down he pulled his hat,
Still the moon kept up her peeping
Through its ragged, raveled brim;
Then his heart went pit-a-pat,
Up his back the chills were creeping; —
All the more she laughed at him!

In a bush he hid his head;
She looked through the leafy spaces,
Smiling! — "Still I see you, sir!"
Then he hid behind the shed,
But the Moon was making faces
When he dared to peep at her.

So all around, around, around,
The laughing Moon pursued him lightly,
And searched out every hiding-place.
His mother in the house he found ;
He caught her hand and held it tightly —
And then the Moon gave up the chase !

THE SQUIRREL



THE squirrel has laid by his winter
store ;
And now high up he sits, beside
his door,
And threatens what he 'll do if
we come near,
Intent on robbing him of his good cheer.
Sometimes by chance he drops a walnut
down,
Then whisks away, — a slender streak of
brown,
But soon returns, to scold at us again.
He may not be more wise or brave than
men,
But if we would believe his valiant boast,
He can, all by himself, withstand a host !

GOSSIPS OF THE NIGHT



THE long, bright, weary hours are
put to rest,
And a light murmur, breathing
from the west,
Tells us the night wind lives
along the earth.
It wakens voices full of slumberous mirth.
The mantling pool breaks out with gurgling
notes,
In measured rounds, from hollow, drinking
throats,
Until we seem to hear the winding thrills
Of some great sea-shell left among the hills.
Sweet birds, self-brooded from the light,
Hear not the droning hymns that greet the
night,
Though all about the leaves are gossips met,
That without ceasing, bicker, pine and fret ;
The feasted locust trills his whirring wing,
And crickets from their crannied door-ways
sing.
The fire-fly's little taper cannot live
Within the splendor that the moon doth
give,
But fades against the willow's misty sweep.

Now small, brown sicklemen the grain-fields
 reap,
And hold, unseen, their frolic harvest home ;
Now busy builders shape the mushroom's
 dome,
Or catch the grass in labyrinths close and
 fine ;
Some toss off flagons filled with mandrake
 wine,
Some in the water-lily floating lie,
Some in the palace of the dragon-fly.

MIDGES



T evening-time when silent are the
 leaves,
And warm the air above the har-
 vest sheaves,
Along some lingering sunbeam's
 red-gold ray,
You'll often see what seems a misty spray.

It is the midges ! If you're passing near,
A low and gentle humming you will hear ;
And you might think it is the air that
 sings —
But no ! it is those countless, filmy wings !

IN A HAMMOCK



GREEN boughs and a hammock, —
a baby swinging, —
Sunshine and shadow, — a little
maid singing —
Oh, 't was a picture of lovely
completeness !

And these were the words the little maid sung,
As backward and forward the hammock
swung :

“ Oh, how sweet the Baby is,
Oh, how sweet the Baby is,
Sweet — sweet — sweet —
Kiss me, Sweetness ! ”

How the baby laughed when her tender sister,
ter,

Keeping time with the singing, bent down
and kissed her.

Oh, 't was a picture of lovely completeness,
Twelve - Years, and Twelve - Months — a
charming duet !

And that picture and song I shall never forget :

“ Oh, how sweet the Baby is,
Oh, how sweet the Baby is, —
Sweet — sweet — sweet —
Kiss me, Sweetness ! ”

BABY'S TEARS



If your little tears could make
The little flowers grow,
Baby, Baby, Baby dear —
How the flowers would grow !

But the flowers, beneath such showers,
Could only droop their heads and die ;
So I cannot see — can you ?
That it 's any use to cry !

BABY'S EVENING-SONG



Now the little white sheep,
And the little black sheep —
They have all gone to sleep
In the fold.

Nothing is black,
Nothing is white,
When the kind old Night —
Hides them all out of sight
In the fold.

And the little children too,
Must do as little lambs do ;

They must all go to sleep
In the fold.

Nothing is hungry,
Nothing is cold,
When it once goes to sleep
In the fold.

And the swift bright things
That fly about on wings,
Round the fields and through the skies —
They have shut their cunning eyes,
And have all gone to rest
In the nest ;

Every little bird's head
Laid upon a feather-bed,
Underneath its mother's breast !
All the swift bright things, —
They have all gone to rest
In the nest.

And the little children too,
Must do as little birds do :
They must all go to rest
In the nest.

Nothing unkind
Can the Baby find,
When she once goes to rest
In the nest.

BABY'S DREAMS



HAT dreams, where memory has
no share,
As free from fear as void of care,
Fill those young sleeping eyes?
What dreams, where dreams can
have no words,
Like flights of lovely unknown birds,
In silence sink or rise?

The baby's dreams are secrets safe,
Howe'er we watch the dreamland waif,
Or question when she wakes.
She only knows (returned once more)
The wave that brings her to our shore
In kisses softly breaks.

"ARE YOUR GRAPES RIPE?"



WARM little face looked in at
my door ;

Half timid, half bold was the look
that it bore,

With a glance at the vines just
overhead,

A sigh, and a pause — then a soft voice said,
"Are your grapes ripe, Miss Thomas?"

For more than a week he has come every day.
Each time, I know what he wishes to say,
With his rosy lips and his wistful sigh,
And I shake my head, with a smile, and reply,
"Not yet ; you must wait, little Theo."

But the sun shines warm, and the vines hang
low, —

So heavy and purple the clusters grow ;
And, when at my doorway to-morrow he
stands,

I'll say, filling both of his chubby hands,
"My grapes are ripe, little Theo."

III

WHEN WINTER COMES



WHEN WINTER COMES

WHAT THE SWALLOWS SAID

TRANSLATED FROM THÉOPHILE GAUTIER



ALREADY the leaves by thousands
Have gone to their winter bed ;
Crisp are the mornings and even-
ings —
The beautiful days are dead !

A few flowers left in the garden
Are decked for a last parade ;
There 's the marigold's yellow bonnet,
And the dahlia's crimson cockade.

Bubbles of rain in the fountain,
Mildew and blight everywhere ;
The swallows are flocking together,
In the numb and aguish air,

On yonder roof, holding a council,
And mustering their forces for flight ;
If I can interpret their language,
They talk of going to-night.

One says : " Delightful is Athens,
And full of choice nesting-places ;
Mine 's in the Parthenon's cornice,
With the carven Hours and Graces."

Another says : " I live at Smyrna,
In a coffee-house, over the door ;
The pilgrims their beads of amber
Are piously telling o'er.

" I dart in and out at my pleasure,
At home in the curling haze,
Sometimes, stooping downward, an instant,
The smokers' bright turbans I graze."

One says : " I build in a temple
That stands on old Baalbec's hill ;
I hang by my claws suspended
My little ones' mouths to fill."

Another says : " Here 's my address —
Rhodes ; at the Palace of Knights.

From the wreaths of its polished black pil-
lars

My summer mansion invites !”

“ Oh, comrades, age overtakes me ;
No very long journey I ’ll try,
But halt on the white cliffs of Malta,
Between the blue sea and blue sky :”

“ How joyous is life at Cairo,
High up in some spire or dome !
My nest is a bold embossment,
Carved of the river loam :”

“ Where the second cataract plunges,
There will I dip my wing ;
I have chosen the site of my dwelling
In the hand of a granite king :”

“ How many fair lands we shall traverse,
Seeking our Southern home ;
Burnt plains and cold snow peaks — and
ocean,
With its mighty chalice of foam !”

Thus counsel the swallows, beholding
The woods and the fields gather rust,

And clapping their wings in approval,
They vanish away on the gust.

I know all their motions and symbols —
I know a bird's thoughts and desires,
I am their captive brother,
Held back by invisible wires !

I remember that anthem of Rückert's —
Would that I too might take wing,
And fly with the swallows, unresting,
Till I hailed the glad sun and green
spring !

OVERHEARD IN AUTUMN WOODS



S I roamed through the motley
forest,
In the mellow age of the year,
As I parted its hanging curtains,
Damask and russet and sere,
The leaves were all talking together
In whisperings, crisp and clear.

The red leaf sighed to the fallow,
“ Alas, you are changed overnight ;

I fear you have taken the jaundice,
And, comrade, were I in your plight,
I would hurry and hide me, hide me,
Away from the searching light !”

The sallow leaf answered the crimson,
“Think of yourself — not of me ;
For if I have taken the jaundice
And am foul for the light to see,
You are hectic and burnt with fever,
And crazy as crazy can be !”

The green leaf, dancing between them,
Mocked in its wanton glee,
“’T is plain that you soon must go earth-
ward,
And leave this light kingdom to me ;
When the wind takes you and whirls
you,
I still shall keep state on the tree !”

Thus, through the motley forest,
Chill rumor flew far and wide,
While the spoiler of all lay plotting
Under the forest-side,
Sharp’ning his silver arrows
For mischief at evening-tide.

“WHAT CHEER?”



HAT cheer, what cheer,
Now December is here,
With snow on the thatch,
And the winds at the latch,
Sighing — sighing !

White wreaths are hung
The pine-boughs among,
The rosebush is shorn,
Showing naught but the thorn ;
And whatever's not dead,
Underfoot or o'erhead
Is slowly dying.

Not a leaf knows the tree
Where its home should be,
But sails on the air,
The wind knows where —
Frightened and flying !

What cheer, what cheer,
Now December is here ?
Get you to sleep
In a nook warm and deep,
(With the cricket for neighbor) ;

Shut your eye fast,
And you 'll fancy, at last,
That the gray world is green,
That the sun breaks the sheen
Of the ice-brooks — and lo !

They talk, as they go,
Of bees at their labor,
Of clover in bloom,
And corn in full plume !
So, little you 'll care,
Though down through the air
The storm swings its sabre.

TWO OWLS



SNOWDON¹ and Long Ears sat
on a limb
In the warmest of winter-down
dressed,
And the air with the snowflake
and twilight grew dim,
When a mouse made a noise in the robin's old
nest ;
And you never would guess that the Snow-
don heard

¹ The name of a species of owl.

Just as well as his cousin, the long-eared
bird!

MORAL

Fine feathers do not make sharp ears.

THE OWL'S SOLILOQUY



In aged Winter when the Sun
Doth journey by the shortest Arc,
And Mortals' Gaze doth seeme to
shun,

Then early comes the friendly
Darke.

When Village Folks their Prayers have said
And soone are sunk in Drowsihed,
When Chimneys send no Smoke nor Spark,
When Trees are frozen stiff and stark,
My Revels I begin to keepe.

With Voice as sweete as any Lark,
I sing unto the gentle Moone,
Or else my Bookes of Magik search,
Like Clerk or Parson of the Church,
Until the Hour of Sable Noone;
And then I leave my forkèd Perch,
And cleave the Aire so still and deepe,
To rouse the ancient jolly Sprights

That wont to cheere the Winter Nights,
And make the Dreames that trouble Sleepe.

Then, shooting Stars drive madly downe ;
And on the Steeples of the Towne
Full many a wicked Antick hops. —
All whirl about like spinning Tops,
While Goblins at the Windowes croone,
And Witches gallop to the Moone.

RALEIGH BELLS



YOU cannot see the minster spire,
Nor village roofs o'ertopped with
snow,
Nor coiling smoke from cottage
fire,
Nor eastern window-panes aglow,
To show that day is springing —
But hark ! the bells are ringing !

They echo from the piny glen,
Where creeps the silent winding stream ;
They answer from the cliffs again,
And die away towards morning's beam ;
The air is barbed and stinging —
Hark ! Raleigh bells are ringing !

Of fir and holly, everywhere,
The happy folk are weaving bowers ;
The candles gleam from niche and stair,
And on the deepest dreaming hours
 The Christmas waits are singing. —
 (Hark ! Raleigh bells are ringing !)

Ring out, ring out the Noël chimes,
Let tower to tower peal glad reply,
And tell their joy a hundred times ;
But yonder, buried from the sky,
 What hands the ropes are swinging ?
 Hark ! Raleigh bells are ringing !

How many winters have they slept,
Whose roof-tree is the valley's floor ?
They have not toiled, nor laughed, nor wept ;
Nor roses bloom beside their door,
 Nor swallows there are winging —
 Yet Raleigh bells are ringing !

Those blessed bells may not be still,
When dawns the holy Christmas morn ;
They tremble 'neath the icy hill,
And thrill the frozen waste forlorn.
 No other daylight springing
 Sets Raleigh bells a-ringing !

SHOE OR STOCKING?



N Holland, children set their
shoes,
This night, outside the door;
These wooden shoes Knecht
Clobes sees,
And fills them from his store.

But here we hang our stockings up
On handy hook or nail;
And Santa Claus, when all is still,
Will plump them, without fail.

Speak out, you Sobersides, speak out,
And let us hear your views;
Between a stocking and a shoe,
What do you see to choose?

One instant pauses Sobersides,
A little sigh to fetch —
“ Well, seems to me a stocking’s best,
For wooden shoes won’t stretch ! ”

MRS. KRISS KRINGLE



H, I laugh to hear what grown folk
Tell the young folk of Kriss
Kringle,
In the Northland, where unknown
folk

Love to feel the frost-wind tingle.

Yes, I laugh to hear the grown folk
Tell you young folk how Kriss Kringle
Travels round the world like lone folk,
None to talk with — always single!

Would a grim and grave old fellow
(Not a chick nor child to care for)
Keep a heart so warm and mellow
That all children he 'd prepare for?

Do you think, my little maiden,
He could ever guess your wishes —
That you 'd find your stocking laden
With a doll and set of dishes?

No; the truth is, some one whispers
In the ear he hears the best with,

What to suit the youngest lispers,
Boys and girls, and all the rest with.

Some one (ah, you guess in vain, dear !)
Nestled close by old Kriss Kringle,
Laughs to see the prancing reindeer,
Laughs to hear the sledge-bells jingle.

Dear old lady, small and rosy !
In the nipping Christmas weather,
Nestled close, so warm and cosy,
These two chat, for hours together.

Oh, her step is always lightest,
And her smile is much the oddest,
And her eye, by far the brightest,
Spies the stocking howe'er modest.

So, if I were in your places,
Rob and Hal, and Kate and Mary,
I would be in the good graces
Of this lovely, shy old fairy.

But I laugh to hear the grown folk
Tell you young folk how Kriss Kringle
Travels round the world, like lone folk, —
None to talk with — always single !

CHRISTMAS BOUGHS



THOU, O pine-tree, sighing
pine!

Give me of thy tresses
fine —

Give to me, that I may weave
Garlands for the blessed eve.
These, in many an arch and loop,
From the rafters we will droop;
Twinkling tapers there shall be
'Mid thy branches, gentle tree;
'Neath the charmèd mistletoe
Thou shalt see the dancèrs go,
Sound of flute and viol soft
Floating to thee up aloft.
Old and young shall hold thee dear,
Summer-green in Winter drear.
Though the guests shall flit away,
These, thy boughs, for many a day —
Many a day and many a night, —
Through the season dim and white,
Shall upon our walls be seen —
Incense-breathing, sweet and clean.
Bid me take thy locks, and weave
Garlands for the blessed eve.

Then the pine-tree bowed her head,
And her fragrant tresses shed :
Take them, if thou wilt, and weave
Garlands for the blessed eve.
Take them, but forbear to fright
Any tender elf or sprite —
Genius of the forest-side —
That among my boughs may hide.
Harm them not, when they shall flit
Through the wreaths which thou hast knit ;
Count them not malicious spies,
Who will watch, with curious eyes,
The blithe dancers in their round,
Whirled on eddies of sweet sound.
Be not vexed, if thou shouldst hear
Mimic voices, small and clear,
Airy whispers, muffled laughs,
Up among the wreathèd rafters !
Harmless spirits are they all ;
Give them shelter in thy hall
Till the Winter's power be broken,
Till the Spring hath sent a token.
Then the faded garlands throw
On the dying brands, and lo !
Still and light, the elfin brood
Hastens to the budding wood !

THE SHIVERING TREE



N the lonesome hill the wind
blows chill,
And it blows all winter through:
And the Shivering Tree, it shivers still,
Just as it used to do!

The leaves so dry — when the wind went
by —

The leaves on the Shivering Tree —
They looked like birds all ready to fly
Away over land and sea!

It was very drear, in the dead of the year,
When I passed the Shivering Tree;
I wonder now if I should hear
What the leaves once said to me:—

“We are so old, and the air is so cold, —
When shall we ever be free,
To sleep in peace, with our friends in the
mould,
Under our parent Tree?”

A STORM AT SEA



AIL-BIRDS of Æolus — out they
fly,

To chop up the sea and darken
the sky !

In a leathern bag they were
sealed up fast,

And into the hold of the good ship cast.

All had gone well, but Ulysses slept,
When the covetous mariners cautiously crept
Into the hold, and forth did drag
That double-sealed mysterious bag.

Ah ha ! small treasure they find within ;
With a mighty rush and a soundful din
Of the trumpets, and fifes, and reeds they
blow,

With hissing lashes of hail and snow,
With many a hoot and taunting cry, —
Æolus' jail-birds — out they fly !

CLOUDS OF EVENING



LOUD merchantmen, with purple
deck and sail
Borne up from sunset by the
evening gale, —
Long dragon mouths like ragged
scimitars,
That follow and devour the little stars!

THE VILLAGE BY THE LAKE



OW is it now, in the year's brief
days,
In the village that sits beside
the lake?
How is it now in the soft, still
ways
Built from above by the flying flake?

How is it now, while the eve delays?

Do the star and the crescent moon go down
On the long west street, while the night wind
sways

The flag-pole that stands in the midst of
the town?

How is it now, in the dim, white nights ?

Do the lone wind-voices come and go ?

Are the roofs a dream, while the village lights

Glimmer afar through the driving snow ?

How is it now, when the slow morns dawn,

And up through the trees the smoke is
curled,

To say that man wakes, and the night is
gone —

How is it now in the old home world ?

Are the young still young, do the old yet
stay —

Do they sigh, do they smile, at the flying
flake ?

How is it now, this many a day,

In the village that sits beside the lake ?

THE WINTER STREET¹



SILENT with star-dust, yonder it
lies —

The Winter Street, so fair and
so white ;

Winding along through the boundless skies,
Down heavenly vale, up heavenly height.

¹ A Swedish name for the Milky Way.

Faintly it gleams, like a summer road
When the light in the west is sinking
low ;
Silent with star-dust ! By whose abode
Does the Winter Street in its windings
go ?

And who are they, all unheard and unseen —
Oh, who are they, whose blessed feet
Pass over that highway smooth and sheen ?
What pilgrims travel the Winter Street ?

Are they not those whom here we miss
In the ways and the days that are vacant
below ?
As the dust of that Street their footfalls
kiss,
Does it not brighter and brighter grow ?

Steps of the children there may stray,
Where the broad day shines though dark
earth sleeps ;
And there at peace in the light they play,
While some one below still wakes and
weeps.

THE FIR-TREE



SINGING Wind
Searching field and wood,
Canst thou find
Aught that 's sweet or good, —
Flowers, to kiss awake,
Or dewy grass, to shake,
Or feathered seed
Aloft to speed ?

Replies the wind :
“ I cannot find
Flowers, to kiss awake,
Or dewy grass to shake,
Or feathered seed
Aloft to speed ;
Yet I meet
Something sweet,
When the scented fir, —
Balsam-breathing fir —
In my flight I stir.

THE SMALL HOURS



LL the old Hours had flown away,
And the small ones only were left
instead.

It was long and long ere the break
of day,

And I could not sleep as I lay in my bed ;
So I saw them come, and saw them go,
But whence or whither I did not know.

It was little One who first went by,
Sleepy, so sleepy he scarce could stand ;
His head was drooping, half-shut was his
eye,
And a lighted candle he held in his hand.
The candle, as on and on he passed,
Became a little white star at last.

But Two had eyes that were watchful and
wide,
And he wore a long cloak and covering cowl.
Softly he stepped, while close at his side
Walked a great mastiff with many a growl.
But the threatening sound became the note
The gruff wind breathed through the chim-
ney's throat.

A witch's daughter was little Three,
And the dreams of the night obeyed her call.
In a pearly ship they put out to sea ;
But the pearly ship was, after all,
Only the bright moon going down
Over the tree-tops and past the town.

Four was an elfin child with a cup
In which was glimmer of sunshine and dew ;
She sprinkled the flowers, and they all
 looked up,
A drop on the bee — and away it flew !
And the song she sung, — a song without
 words —
Was the wild good-morning of joyous birds !

So the Small Hours passed my chamber door.
I saw them come, and I saw them go :
Little One, little Two, little Three, little
 Four !
They've all grown up long since, I know ;
Yet other Small Hours there must be, each
 night,
To watch in their places till morning-light.

THE LITTLE WATCHER



Y watch — little watcher, good
night !

You 're as true as steel and as
good as gold,

And changeless alike in darkness
or light ;

So wake, while the night grows gray and
old.

My watch — little watcher, good morning !

Yours are the hands that never will shirk ;
Three jewels there are your soul adorn-
ing —

I call them Constancy, Patience, and Work.

My watch — little watcher, good night !

'T is a comfort to have you so very near ;
For you seem to say, "All 's right, all 's
right !"

As the beat of your faithful heart I hear.

My watch — little watcher, good morning !

You 're telling me now, "'T is a precious
day !"

If ever a spendthrift I grow, give me warn-
ing :

The hours are slipping too quickly away.

“THE CRICKET KEPT THE HOUSE”



WAS not as lonesome as it might
have been.

A little sunbeam oftentimes
peeped in,

And played upon the hearth ; and
on the wall

Your picture smiled at mine — but, best of all,
The Cricket kept the house while we were
gone,

And sang from dawn to dark, from dark to
dawn.

IV

WHAT'S MY THOUGHT
LIKE?



WHAT'S MY THOUGHT LIKE?

WHAT'S MY THOUGHT LIKE?



HAT 'S my Thought like?
Like a bird, or like the air,
For it ranges everywhere!
Like a bird, afar it flies,
Spreads its wings in other skies.
Fancy beckons, Thought pursues,
And returns with strangest news!

What 's my Thought like?
'T is like that, or 't is like this —
Nothing ever comes amiss.
Now my Thought has taken wing,
Let us see what it will bring.

ADVICE

It follows us wherever we may go ;
We follow it whene'er we list do so.

THE REWARD



He lost the prize ;
But this of him record, —
His work well done
He counts as his reward.

FRIEND-SHIP



It is a goodly sail
Before a favoring gale ;
It is a wealthy freight,
Exceeding Kings' estate ;
It is a faithful crew —
Heaven bring this ship to you !

INSTINCT

[TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN]



SAY, my bird, so free and light,
Say whither dost thou wing thy
flight ? ”

“ I cannot, cannot say,
But instinct leads the way,
And therefore must the way be right ! ”

“ But say, dear bird, so light and free —
But say what doth Hope promise thee ? ”

“ A heaven calm and fair —
A sweet and pleasant air, —
New springtime Hope doth promise me ! ”

“ But how so sure, that hast not seen
As yet that far-off land serene ? ”

“ The questions thou dost ask
Are but an easy task ;
Not so to answer them, I ween ! ”

Its holy instinct safe doth guide
The bird across the waters wide ;
A heaven calm and fair,
A sweet and pleasant air,
The happy traveler shall betide.

THE FEUD OF LAND AND SEA



THE Ocean and the Land made
peace,
And each one sent a token,
That their new friendship might
increase,
Their faith be kept unbroken.

The gentle Land sent meadow-sweet
Upon a hurrying brook,
And laid it at the gray king's feet —
His waves the gift uptook.

The Sea a wreath of seaweed tossed
Far inland on the tide ;
Its salty kiss was keen as frost —
The grass-blade shrank and died !

The Land then sent a painted moth,
Borne out upon the breeze ;
The Ocean sprites with chains of froth
The lovely waif did tease.

The Sea sent back a scallop-shell,
The shell an osprey bore ;
The Land received it where it fell,
Upon a mossy floor.

The Land then sent a noble tree,
That crowned a river-bank ;
The laden stream into the Sea
With weary murmurs sank.

The Sea returned a broken spar
('T was once the forests' pride !)
The Land reproached him from afar,
And all her forests sighed :

“ Such cruel gifts as thou dost send,
As thou dost send to me —
How can I longer be thy friend,
Thou bitter, bitter Sea ! ”

A SERMON ON THE LEAF



Y all the winds of Heaven
The homeless leaves are driven,
Like chaff from winnowed grain,
Till, sodden by the rain,
They lie with seasons old
That knit the forest-mould —
Ten autumns all in one !
Their use is never done,
But only now begun :
For they must shield the grass

When frost and sleet-wind pass ;
And they must house the seeds
In the rich woods and meads,
And fold the violet
In a warm coverlet,
And keep back forward flowers
Till seasonable hours,
When gleams of April sky
Are shed through clouds on high.

LITTLE FRIENDS IN FAIRYLAND



WHEN I was a child I used to roam
In wonderful regions, though
near at home ;
For I feigned that the Queen of
Fairyland
Made me a Knight, by the stroke of her
wand —

A Knight whose mission it was to seek
And rescue the captive and the weak,
Wherever I found them in her domain,
Bind up their wounds and relieve their pain !

Now the cat, that under the trumpet-vine lay,
Was a tiger that crouched for a royal prey ;
For the humming-bird, with his ruby gem,

Was heir to a fairy diadem !
So I drove Grimalkin far away,
And the bird flew back to his mother fay.

If a fly was caught in a net of gauze,
The spider a wicked enchanter was ;
So I broke the net, and the fly went free ;
But if ever the spider I chanced to see
Adrift on the stream — a luckless rover —
With a leaf for a raft, I helped him over !

If a honey-bee fell by the way, overladen,
I saw in her a patient maiden,
One of the toilers that gather nectar
For my Queen and her Court, so I must protect her !

So I made a staff of a stem of grass,
And helped to her feet the fairy lass !

If I met a tortoise, clumsy and slow,
I took him along where he wished to go.
If a merry hopper by chance was lamed,
If a grig by some careless foot was maimed,
A litter of leaves I quickly made,
And carried the sufferer into the shade.

So I traveled abroad, the long summer days,
In the wonderful realm of the Queen of Fays.

Though I never came yet to the Court of the
Queen,
I have heard her voice, her smile I have
seen !
Her voice, in the whispering leaves, I have
heard,
In the hum of insect and twitter of bird ;
And her smile with the sunny landscape
blends,
And all of her subjects are my true friends.

HOW THE FIELD-MICE HELPED THE KING



O Vulcan's temple Egypt's king,
Oppressed with terror, flies ;
In Vulcan's temple, as he sleeps,
A vision fills his eyes.
The dusky fane is dim with
light, —
The God of Skill stands near ;
His voice is heard amid the hush :
" King Sethon, be of cheer !
The Arab and the Syrian host
To-morrow shalt thou meet ;
Thou shalt be master of the field,

Theirs be the flying feet !
I will to thee such allies send
Thy foes shall flee like chaff,
And thou and all thou ledest forth
Shall at their ruin laugh ! ”

In Vulcan’s temple Egypt’s king
Awoke with joyous cry,
“ The great Artificer hath sworn
To send a strong ally.”
The voice of Egypt’s king goes forth :
“ No longer troubled be ;
My legions stay not till they reach
Pelusium by the Sea ! ”

They reached Pelusium by the Sea,
King Sethon and his host ;
They saw the invader’s banners wave,
They heard his trumpet’s boast ;
Yet there encamped by night they dwelt,
And dreadless slept till dawn ;
At morn they look to see the foe
In battle line updrawn.
But no ! the Syrian banner droops,
The trumpet’s boast is mute ;
A dastard and retreating foe —
King Sethon gives pursuit !

Before the Egyptian's breath they flee
Like chaff of winnowed grain !
Where is the knotted club, the spear,
The bow and shaft of cane ?
Like chaff before the wind they flee,
They strew in death the field !
Where are the buskin and cuirass,
And the stout leathern shield ?

Let Sethon's allies answer make,
Who, in the silent night,
While Egypt's foes securely slept,
Disarmed them from the fight !
Let Sethon's allies answer make —
Small legions of the field,
Whose teeth devoured the bow of cane,
The arrow and the shield !
(Small timorous dwellers of the turf
Whose foes beset each way !
Yet, to an old and sacred realm
'T was ye that saved the day !)

In Vulcan's temple Egypt's king
Gives thanks unto the God,
For that the mighty Framer raised
Such allies from the sod.
In Vulcan's temple Egypt's king
In sculptured stone doth stand,

With bowèd head and musing eyes, —
A field-mouse in his hand !
And on the statue's base these words
In golden work appear :
“ *Now, whosoever looks on me,
Let him the Gods revere !*”

KING DAVID'S COIN



HIS the coin that David stamped :
On one side, an host encamped,
Zion's watch-towers, fair and high,
Traced upon a golden sky ;
On the other, symbols two
Were engraved with skill as true ;
There were seen the scrip and crook,
That by pasture slope and brook
David bore in summers old —
Symbols of the flock and fold.

Prince, it fits (whoe'er thou art)
Thou engrave this on thy heart —
Prince, or yeoman whom thy fate
Yet may lift to thronèd state :
Humility becomes the king
More than sceptre, crown, or ring.

CRUELTY



HE led a cruel life, men say ;
That steely heart, that iron hand,
Each creature did in fear obey,
Ev'n to the beast that bore his
brand.

That iron hand ! that steely heart !
When death at last bade him despair,
The frightened watcher saw him start
At some dread vision of the air.

'T was not the poor, unclothed, unfed,
Nor drudge that toiled 'mid tears and sighs ;
But only a gaunt horse's head,
With starting veins and glazing eyes,
That fixed his glance by night, by day,
Between the curtains looming grim.
He lived a cruel life, men say,
But cruelly death came to him.

DICK WHITTINGTON LEAVES LONDON



HERE is none to give him speed-
ing,

He is homeless, he is friendless ;
He knows not where the road is
leading,

It lies before him black and endless.

But hark ! Bow bells are chiming,

“ Turn again ! turn again ! turn again ! ”

And the daylight slowly is climbing,

Up past the smoke of the city.

“ Turn again ! turn again ! turn again ! ”

Oh, is it not a strange ditty,

To which his young heart-beats are rhym-
ing ?

What has he done, or left undone,

That Bow bells are chiming and chiming,

“ Turn again ! turn again ! turn again ? ”

The daylight is beaming,

. The fresh wind is playing ;

He thinks he 's but dreaming

That Bow bells are saying,

“ Turn again ! turn again ! turn again !

Thrice Lord Mayor of London ! ”

AN EAGLE'S QUILL



AM an eagle's quill,
Shed in his towering flight.
Finder, hast thou the skill
To read and use me aright?

The north wind, whistling shrill,
Smote me with freshening spray ;
Its spirit in me, still,
Doth teach me all I say.

If I could trace a scroll,
(As I have traced the air),
Without thy hand's control,
This should be written there :

Be free, be free, be free,
And build thine aerie high ;
Sweep thou the land and sea
And silent deeps of sky.

My meaning is not dark ;
Make thou a shaft, or pen,
And drive it to the mark —
All servile ways of men !

Pursue and pierce deceit,
Make it thy game and mirth ;
And, though the lie run fleet,
See it be pinned to earth !

I am an eagle's quill,
Fair chance bestowed on thee ;
Now, fashioned to thy will,
What dost thou write with me ?

THE RAINBOW IN HER TEARS



ONCE the Little Girl that cried,
Looking through her tears espied
Lovely motes of colored light
In the fringes of her eye —
Just as when the weather clears,
And the clouds are put to flight,
There 's a rainbow in the sky.

And the Little Girl that cried,
As she saw this lovely sight, —
This fine rainbow in her tears, —
Would forget the reason why
She had thought it best to cry.

MADELINE'S HAPPY THOUGHT



WHOSE baby is that?" said Madeline's mother,
When Madeline looked at the new baby brother.
Into her four-year-old mind flew a vision
Of love transferred from herself to another.
"That is my baby," she said with decision,
"And I am your baby, my own darling mother!"

DAISY WITH ONE DIMPLE



OUR Daisy has one dimple
Sweet and shy,
Just one — and would you know
The reason why?

Dame Nature met our Daisy
Sweet and shy;
She kissed her on one cheek —
And then passed by!

THE WRONG WORD

A CONVERSATION



AND how did lessons go, at school,
to-day?"

"I had them all. The tables I
could say."

"You never peeped between the
leaves, to see?"

"Oh, mother, how could *you* think that of
me?"

"And in deportment you were 'perfect,'
too?"

"I did not whisper once the whole day
through."

"What, then, my love, disturbs your con-
science so?"

"I was — well, a PREVARICATOR — oh!"

"Prevaricators say what is not true;
And that I do not think you ever do."

"And yet I'm sure the teacher called me so,
Because I was so very, very slow!"

"You do not mean, dear, a *prevaricator*;
She might have called you a *procrastinator*."

"Oh, yes! she said it was a fault I had;
But, mother dear, is that so very bad?"

A LITTLE QUAKER

A TRUE INCIDENT



WITH hands clasped softly in your
lap,
And hair tucked back beneath
your cap,
And snowy kerchief trimly
crossed,
And lifted eyes in reverie lost —
Friend Phoebe, won't you tell me why
You look so far away, and sigh?
Why don't you leave your little chair,
And take the sunshine and fresh air?"

"Friend Edith, I will tell thee why
I sit so still, and sometimes sigh.
Dear grandma says we can't be right
Unless we have the 'inner light.'
(I did n't have the 'inner light,'
Although I tried with all my might!)
"Well, first-day morning Grandma goes
To meeting, always, as thee knows,
And either takes John, Ruth, or me;
I go one morning out of three.

“’T was ‘silent meeting’ yesterday.
High up sat old Friend Hathaway ;
His thumbs upon his cane were placed,
And he looked stern and solemn-faced.
Friend Hodges and Friend Underwood —
They would n’t smile — not if they could !
(Thee knows, I think they ’re very *good*!)
Up in the gallery they sat,
Each one looked down beneath his hat,
And thought, and *thought*, and THOUGHT,
and THOUGHT,
But would n’t speak out, as they ought !

“It was so still inside the house
That I could hear the little mouse
A-gnawing, gnawing in the wall.
Outside it was n’t still at all !
The birds were singing in the trees,
And I could hear the boring-bees
(The clumsy kind of bee that leaves
Those little holes along the eaves).
It was so very still inside,
To keep awake how hard I tried !
I ate a peppermint, or two —
But that was very wrong, I knew.
All of a sudden, then, the birds
And bees began to sing these words :
‘ Friend Phoebe, come outside and play,

And never mind Friend Hathaway !
 It seemed to me I must obey —
 I walked straight out the open door !
 No child, thee knows, did so before.

“ To punish me (I'm sure it's right —
 I did n't have the 'inner light !')
 I'm not allowed to go and play
 Till I make up for yesterday.
 Oh, dear, I must n't speak to thee —
 It's 'silent meeting' — don't thee see ? ”

TEMPER



DEAR child, whoe'er or where'er
 you may be,
 When I was little, long, long
 ago,

These words were said by my
 mother to me, —

Words that by heart I used to know :

“ If your temper you do not rule, you will see,
 Edith, your temper will surely rule *you* ;
 Then, no one can love you — alone you will
 be —

Alone in the world — and what will you do ? ”

Alone in the world? I grew still at the
thought.

No one could love me? Why, how could I
live?

My temper was gone, and soon I was caught
In the arms, to the heart that best comfort
could give!

THE MOTHER WHO DIED TOO



HE was so little — little in her
grave,

The wide earth all around so
hard and cold —

She was so little! therefore did
I crave

My arms might still her tender form enfold.
She was so little, and her cry so weak

When she among the heavenly children
came —

She was so little — I alone might speak

For her who knew no word nor her own
name.

THE LITTLE SELF



WISH the stately goldenrod
Might kiss the little wind-flower
sweet,
That asters might to cowslips nod,
And eyebright run in haste to greet
The violet from the April sod —
So once the Fall and Spring might meet.

I wish my Little Self and I
Might sometime cross each other's way.
My Little Self is wondrous shy ;
I cannot meet her any day,
Howe'er I search, howe'er I pry
About these meadows autumn-gay.

The runaway, the teasing elf !
She flits where woodland blossoms drift ;
She has a world of pretty pelf
She gathered from the ripples swift ;
Such joys she has, my Little Self
Will not be lured by any gift.

She's light as bird upon the wing,
Her cheeks and eyes are all aglow.
To me what gladness she could bring !

To her I should be strange, I know.
My Little Self holds fast the Spring,
And Autumn will not let me go !

Yet still I wish the goldenrod
Might kiss the little wind-flower sweet,
That asters might to cowslips nod,
And eyebright run in haste to greet
The violet from the April sod.—
But Fall and Spring can never meet !

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